

# SMART CONSERVATION

## AND SMART GROWTH



*King County's Urban Growth Area Boundary, our "wall against sprawl," is helping to keep our rural areas rural.*

### ***Enhancing Our Quality of Life in King County***

**H**ealthy, sustainable and prosperous communities in King County begin with vision and are backed by leadership, planning and execution. Under Ron Sims, King County has achieved national acclaim for forward-thinking policies in areas ranging from bio-fueled rapid transit and open space protection, to building a world-class trail network, restoring salmon habitat and implementing carbon-neutral waste management techniques.

Our challenge is to ensure that tomorrow's livable communities will be there for our children by building on today's accomplishments.

### ***Growing Sustainable Communities***

***Global warming: acting locally, leading nationally*** - King County is recognized nationally for its forward-looking policies and aggressive strategies to reduce and adapt to global warming. Four executive orders recently signed by Sims commit the county to:

- Ensure that 50 percent of King County's energy use comes from renewable energy sources by the year 2012 (2020 for transit).
- Increase the amount of biodiesel mix used in the county's vehicles from the current five percent to 20 percent, making King County Washington State's largest purchaser of the environmentally friendly fuel.
- Maximize the reclamation of water produced at its sewage treatment plants for use by agriculture and industry, leaving tens of millions of gallons of drinking water in rivers and streams, and for human consumption.
- Use all waste gases produced at treatment plants and the Cedar Hills Landfill for climate-friendly energy purposes allowing a maximum carbon sequestration of hundreds of thousands of tons of potential greenhouse gas emissions.
- Conserve an additional 100,000 acres of green space in King County by 2010, on top of the more than 130,000 acres already conserved.



**King County**





*Executive Sims and hundreds of volunteers participated in a restoration project along the Sammamish River.*

- Coordinating land use and transit policies to promote a sharp increase in public transit use.

These policies, combined with our rigorous corporate emissions accounting practices, put the county in the forefront in preparing our region for a future "carbon market," to adapt to and reduce the effects of global warming.

**Growth Management** —King County is a recognized leader in protecting and preserving natural resources and rural lands, while maintaining the vitality of our urban centers:

- Building and defending the Urban Growth Area Boundary, our "Wall Against Sprawl." Rural development has dropped to just 4 percent of overall county growth, keeping rural areas rural.
- Directing development to vital economic centers.
- Focusing investment on key infrastructure services for our urban areas: transportation, clean water, and sewer capacity.
- Preserving open space through acquisition and transfer of development rights.

**Protecting and restoring critical areas** —After years of input from citizens and elected officials, King County has

updated its Critical Areas regulations to provide increased protections for drinking water, streams, wetlands and wildlife, and protections from flooding and erosion. The new science-based measures:

- Make farming and forestry easier than under previous regulations.
- Are coupled with flexibility, tax incentives, and free technical advice to landowners to maintain stream, river and riparian habitat while supporting agriculture, forestry and low-intensity housing development.
- Retain forest cover in rural basins ensuring future water resources for the next generation.

**Keeping family farms vital** —Puget Sound Fresh, a multi-county marketing program is helping consumers identify locally-grown products. Funded by King County, Puget Sound Fresh has helped grow the number of farmer's markets from five to 20 in less than 10 years.

## Engaged in Smart Conservation

**Building a green legacy** —Since 1997 King County has invested nearly \$139 million in open space, parks and resource protection. Our Department of Natural Resources and Parks has solidified King County's reputation as one of America's most dynamic natural resource management agencies. Its programs and projects have been distinguished with more than 130 national and regional awards since 2000.

① **Snoqualmie Tree Farm:** In 2004 King County executed one of the nation's largest forest preservation agreements to protect 90,000 acres in east King County from development forever. This historic \$22 million deal more than triples the amount of open space preserved by the county



over the past 35 years through a variety of programs. It reinforces the urban growth line, protects timber industry jobs, acts as a buffer to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area and ensures the area will always remain green to the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

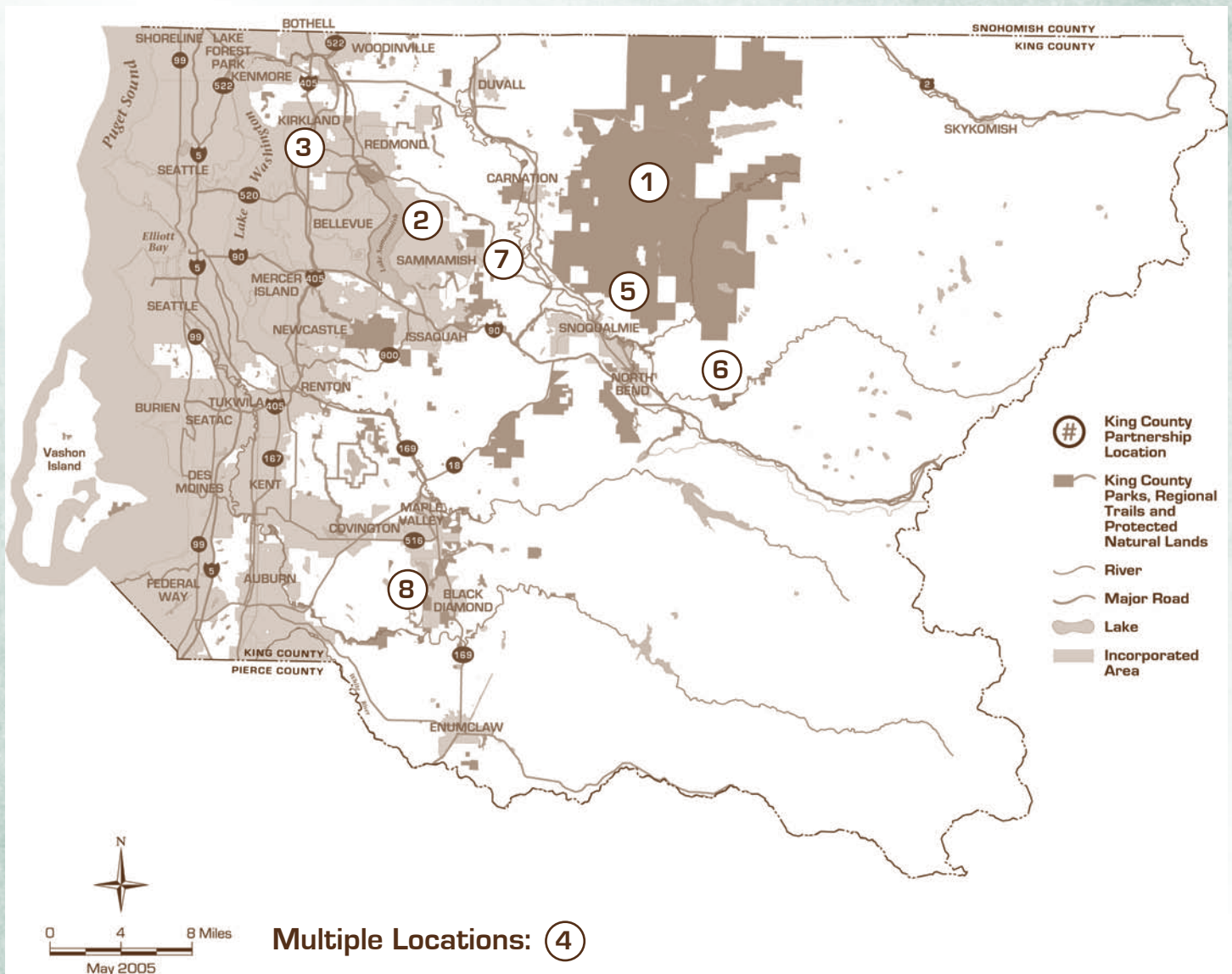
### **Developing a world-class trail**

**system** —The King County Regional Trail System is one of the most extensive networks

in the United States that today links Puget Sound to the Cascade Mountains and many communities in between. Our spectacular 157 mile system includes both paved and gravel routes for of all manner of non-motorized use. The County has an additional 70 miles of right-of-way acquired for future trail development, with the ultimate goal of a 300-mile network.

## **KING COUNTY PARKS, TRAILS AND PROTECTED LANDS**

***Over the past 8 years King County has added 100,000 acres of preserved land—a five-fold increase from the 25,000 acres in 1996.***







*Ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of the East Lake Sammamish Trail.*

**Greenprint:** In King County computerized analysis or “greenprinting” is helping agencies and conservationists prioritize what land should be protected. An innovative Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer modeling approach developed by Trust for Public Land (TPL) in partnership with King County helps the county identify what lands need to be protected and why. Greenprinting evaluates multiple conservation priorities, including recreation, watershed protection, habitat preservation, and flood control. It offers an objective way to evaluate land for protection, helping diverse community members reach common ground on conservation planning. Greenprint helps King County spend scarce conservation dollars in the most effective manner possible.

**② East Lake Sammamish Trail:** Cascade Land Conservancy initially purchased the corridor that will become the East Lake Sammamish Trail and sold the corridor to King County. After more than nine years of permitting and legal challenges, King County has acquired all necessary permits and recently opened the eleven mile trail for use in March 2006. The trail is a crucial link in one of the best regional trail systems in the country.

**③ Burlington Northern Santa Fe Rail Corridor:** King County has obtained exclusive rights to negotiate acquisition of the 47-mile Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) eastside rail line to create a rail and trail corridor. An immense King County legacy, the trail will run from the City of Renton to the City of Snohomish, dwarfing the 27-mile Burke Gilman Trail, and serve as the backbone to the finest regional trail network in the nation.

**④ Cascade Foothills Initiative:** King County signed the historic letter of intent on February 2, 2004 proclaiming its partnership with the Cascade Land Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land and Snohomish and Pierce Counties to protect 600,000 acres of highly developable, privately owned industrial timberland just west of the Cascades. Through acquisitions, growth management and conservation, King County is working with other counties and conservation organizations to protect the precious forestland in the Cascade foothills.

**⑤ Snoqualmie Preservation Initiative:** In 2001 King County and the Cascade Land Conservancy negotiated an agreement along with Quadrant Homes and the City of Snoqualmie to permanently protect from development 145 acres directly adjacent to Snoqualmie Falls. The initiative protects more than 9,000 acres



*Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River*



of Raging River Forestland, enhances trails, and establishes a planning framework for future growth in the Snoqualmie area. Most importantly, it secures the historic views of this sacred landmark for all future generations.

### ⑥ **Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Valley:**

in 2002 King County acquired 60 acres in the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Valley for water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation, building on the vision for a protected river corridor.

⑦ **Treemont:** In 2003 an innovative collaboration between King County, Cascade Land Conservancy and Port Blakely Tree Farms to purchase the 250 acre forest property known as Treemont conserved highly threatened open spaces while limiting rural development. Previously slated for private development of urban-style homes, the conservation easement deal reduces the number of home sites from 194 to 30, while also allowing for public access and promotion of forest health. Of the 250 acres within the Treemont Property, approximately 120 acres will be publicly accessible open space. The entire property will be managed under a comprehensive Forest Stewardship Plan.

### ⑧ **Black Diamond Open Space Agreement:**

Finalized in 2006, this model public/private partnership preserves 4,500 acres of open space, lakes, parks, forest and trails, producing a tremendous legacy for the citizens of Black Diamond and King County (See Anatomy of Two Deals).

**Future Projects:** King County is working with the Cascade Land Conservancy, the Trust for Public Lands, timber companies and developers on projects to bring miles of future trails and thousands of acres of open space and forests.

### **Leading the way on sustainable building**

—In 2001, Ron Sims signed an Executive order requiring new buildings and



major renovations to comply with national environmental standards set forth in the Leadership I Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) rating system. In 2004 the Executive and council enacted a Green Building Ordinance, making King County one of the first local governments to codify its green building program. King Street Center was the most eco-friendly building in the region when it opened in 1999, saving more than \$200,000 in energy costs since opening, and conserving an estimated 1.4 million gallons of water each year.

The county was instrumental in creating the Built Green program with the Master Builders Association and Snohomish County. Since the program launched in 2005, over 5,000 homes have been certified, representing 17 percent of the market share of new construction.

## **Using Water Wisely**

**Planning for future water** —Executive Sims and the Cascade Water Alliance, a consortium of eight cities and water districts in King County are developing a regional water supply plan to meet the future needs of our environment, population and economy. The plan will prioritize water supplies to meet the region's needs (both human and environmental), including reclaimed water for agriculture and industrial use, a drought-proof source that will be available in large quantities from King County's future Brightwater treatment plant.

**King County is working with farmers in agriculture districts to keep family farms vital.**

**The Master Builders Association awarded King County Executive Ron Sims with the first-ever "Built Green Hammer Award" for public advocacy of green building.**



*Drought-proof water supply that frees up clean water for people and fish.*



**Brightwater Treatment Plant** —King County has begun construction on a state-of-the-art regional wastewater treatment plant, called Brightwater, to protect public health, water quality and the environment of generations to come. Starting in 2010, Brightwater will treat up to 36 million gallons of sewage a day for King and Snohomish counties. As our region continues to grow, the plant will be expanded to treat 54 million gallons a day. The plant will integrate odor control, landscaping, architecture, wildlife habitat, art and other community created design concepts. The new facilities will include a treatment plant and conveyance (pipeline) system contained in secure underground tunnels, terminating at a marine outfall installed at a depth of 600 feet, nearly a mile offshore.

**Reclaiming wastewater for safe use** —Each year the county's Wastewater Treatment Division produces more than 290 million gallons of reclaimed water for landscape irrigation and industrial processes. When Brightwater comes online in 2010, using "membrane bioreactor" technology, the facility will produce tens of millions of gallons of water per day, treated to a very high standard, creating a drought-proof supply for irrigation and industry.

**Safely treating wastewater** —In 2004, King County's network of 42 pump stations, 335 miles of sewer line and two regional treatment plants safely conveyed and

treated an average of 183 million gallons of wastewater per day.

**Controlling industrial waste**—King County's Industrial Waste Program continues to work with large and small businesses to prevent harmful wastes from entering the wastewater treatment system and make our biosolids safe for recycling. In recent years, the program has also worked with its regional and local partners to identify and control sources of pollutants to the Duwamish Waterway.

**Using biosolids to enhance agriculture, forestry, landscaping**—King County's Wastewater Treatment Division is always seeking ways to recycle byproducts of its wastewater treatment system, including the current use of biosolids to enhance soil in agriculture, forestry and landscaping.



**Snoqualmie Falls  
– saved by CLC  
and King County  
from development  
forever.**



## ***Saving Puget Sound***

***Cleaning up Puget Sound*** - Executive Ron Sims in partnership with Governor Christine Gregoire, Congressman Norm Dicks and former two-time EPA Administrator Bill Ruckelshaus is supporting the launch of a new initiative to clean up Puget Sound. The partnership is developing an aggressive 15-year plan to solve Puget Sound's most vexing problems, including:

- Recommending a set of key actions to recover the Sound by 2020.
- Engaging citizens, governments, the business and conservation communities, and others in ramping up efforts to recover the Sound.
- Recommending best organizational structures and approaches to steward the Sound back to health and protect it over time.
- Identifying funding and setting spending priorities to achieve the desired outcomes by 2020.
- Advising on how broad-based scientific knowledge should be organized and applied in reaching cleanup goals.

Initial recommendations are due in June 2006.

***Leading salmon recovery and watershed-based planning***—King County is a co-founder of Shared Strategy for Puget Sound. The consortium engages citizens, tribes, experts, agencies, environmental groups, and business leaders to build a cost-effective salmon recovery plan endorsed by the people living and working in our watersheds. In 1998, Executive Sims and King County brought together Pierce and Snohomish counties to develop the Tri-County Endangered Species Act Response, a model on which much of today's salmon conservation planning in Puget Sound is based. King County is leading habitat planning for our major watersheds via the



***King County  
Executive  
Ron Sims***

Water Resource Inventory Area process, in cooperation with local governments in each watershed.

## ***Conserving energy***

***Generating electricity from digester gas*** —With the help of federal grant funding, **the world's largest molten-carbonate fuel cell demonstration project** at King County's South Wastewater Treatment Plant in Renton continues to test the promise of supplying energy with little air pollution. A second project at South Plant is under way to expand the plant's ability to convert gas to electricity by using turbines. These projects are expected to make the facility largely energy-independent.

***Investing in innovative, sustainable energy sources*** —With a million tons of garbage deposited at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill each year, King County has created a public/private partnership to convert the landfill's methane gas into energy. At no cost to ratepayers, this project will produce enough power for 16,000 homes, cut county energy costs by \$80,000 annually and generate more than \$400,000 in revenues annually.



## Improving Transportation

**Leading a 'hybrid' nation** — King County is a nationally recognized leader in the use of hybrid and alternative vehicles. Now, King County is sharing that knowledge, leading a consortium of governments in purchasing hybrid vehicles. This effort will spread the use of these cleaner, energy efficient vehicles while driving down their cost.

**A leaner, greener, biodiesel bus fleet** — 212 highly efficient hybrid diesel-electric buses are on our roads today, ranking King County among the nation's largest users of cutting-edge transit technology. Far less polluting and more energy efficient than their predecessors, Metro will soon be powering the fleet with a 20% blend of biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur fuel providing the "tipping point" for economic viability of fuel-producing seed crops here in Washington.

**More buses, more often** — King County Metro has increased bus service by more than 290,000 hours since 2000. King County Metro has one of the largest bus fleets in the country, running 1,300 buses and providing approximately 3.5 million hours of service annually. The agency works closely with Sound Transit, Community Transit, Pierce Transit and the Washington State Ferries to connect riders from their homes to their jobs with a coordinated regional transportation network.

*Metro Transit links north and south King County while integrating with both the community and the environment.*

*A new hybrid bus — increasing service, decreasing pollution.*



## For More Information:

King County Department of Natural Resources  
and Parks Annual Report  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/dnrp/pa/pdf/04DNRPAAnnualReport.pdf>

King County forestry programs  
including preservation initiatives  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/topics/forestry/FORTopic.htm>

King County agriculture programs  
including farmland preservation  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/topics/agri/agtopic.htm>

King County Department of Transportation  
<http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/kcdot.htm>

Cascade Land Conservancy  
[www.cascadeland.org](http://www.cascadeland.org)

Trust for Public Lands  
[www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)

## Alternative Formats Available

206-296-4002  
TTY Relay: 711



King County